

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

13-78D

Orleans

EAS.1283

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: EASTHAM

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Eastham Center

Photograph



2018 Assessor Photo

Address: 1205 Herring Brook Road

Historic Name: Maurice and Ruth Gill House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: ca. 1930

Source: Deed research, Eastham tax records

Style/Form: No Style

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Unknown

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Garage (if original, ca. 1924-1938)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

None on record

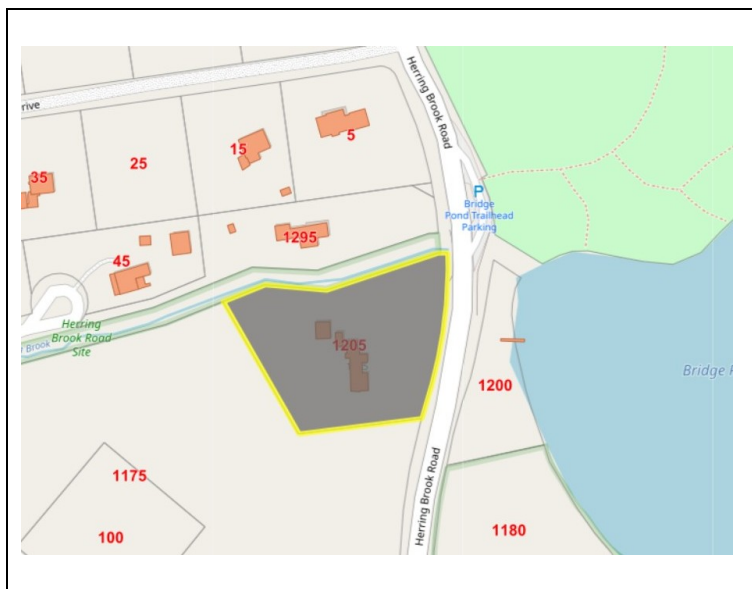
Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 1.45 acres

Setting: This parcel is located in the ponds region west of Eastham Village. The surrounding area includes undeveloped scrub pine forests and Bridge Pond to the east, and mid-20th century subdivisions to the west and north. The parcel, which rises up from the street, is open around the house but remains forested along the street, obscuring the house from public view.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant, for

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2025

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

1205 HERRING BROOK ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

(This house is obscured from view from the street; this Description is based on 2018 Assessor photos.)

The form of this house consists of a series of offset, one-story blocks with gable roofs. The elevations are clad in wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The roofs are clad in asphalt shingles. The largest block is surmounted by a cupola, and an exterior brick chimney rises up the end gable. The stepped-down block also has a low brick chimney. Fenestration on the front elevation appears to consist of modern casement windows with applied muntin patterns. The rear elevation has wood, single-glazed 6/6 double-hung sash which may be original or early windows. The front entrance is located off-centered on the largest block.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Incorporated as Nauset Plantation in 1646, and changed to Eastham in 1651, Eastham territory originally extended south to Pleasant Bay in Orleans and north beyond Wellfleet Harbor. The early development pattern for what we now know as Eastham was impacted by its absence of deep-water harbor facilities. Relatively fertile soil led to dispersed agricultural settlement, but residential and commercial development was concentrated to the north at Wellfleet Harbor and to the south at Town Cove and Pleasant Bay. When the separate towns of Wellfleet and Orleans were created in the late-18th century, Eastham became and remained one of the least populated towns on the Cape throughout the 19th century.

In the 19th century, Eastham was the agricultural center of the Outer Cape. Crops evolved over time; corn and dairy were surpassed in the early-20th century by asparagus and turnips - two crops well suited for the sandy soil. In 1900, 58% of Eastham's workers were employed as farmers, but by 1930 that number had dwindled to 21%. Summer resort development, including cottage colonies and subdivisions of former farmland that would transform Eastham, had begun in earnest in the 1920s as middle-class access to car ownership increased and Cape roads were improved.

Title research for this property goes back to 1927, when a large tract of land, spanning from Bridge Pond west to Massachusetts Bay, was registered in Land Court with Maurice D. and Ruth E. Gill of Providence, RI owning an 11/15 interest and Austin E. and Harriet M. Cole owning a 4/15 interest. The following year, the Coles conveyed their 4/15 share to the Gills.¹ The land was described as Lots A, B, C and D on a 1924 Land Court Plan (Figure 2).² According to Eastham real estate tax records, the Gills were first taxed for a cottage, garage and outbuilding in 1930.³ The United States Geological Survey (USGS) began conducting periodic aerial photographic surveys of Cape Cod in 1938. That first aerial survey in 1938 shows this house and garage and its context at that time (Photo 3).

Maurice Doane Gill (1891-1973) was born in Reading, MA, the son of Sydna and George Gill, a building carpenter. Maurice and his wife, Ruth Evelyn Gill (1893-1974) lived in Providence, RI where he worked for a tar products company, eventually becoming vice-president. The Gills began recording subdivisions of Lots C and D in the 1960s. This cottage is located on Lot B.

In 1975, the executor under the will of Maurice Gill sold Lots A and B, and a small parcel close to the bay on Lot D to their daughter, Marian (Gill) Thomas of Barrington, RI.⁴ She was married to Frederick Wallace Thomas (1916-2013), and he worked for a zipper (fastener) manufacturing company. In 1991, Lot B was subdivided with this house shown on Lot 29. Unlike Lots C and D, however, Lot B remains largely undeveloped. This property remains in the Thomas family.

¹ Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Cert. of Title #1727.

² Land Court Plan 10719-B.

³ Eastham tax records for 1927-1929 are not available.

⁴ Cert. of Title #65301.

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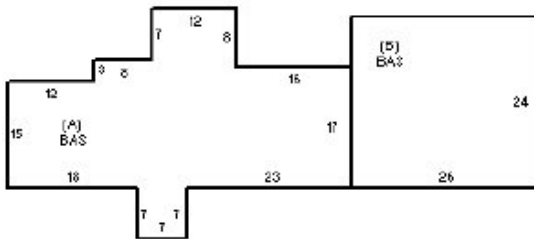


Figure 1. Assessor Sketch.



Photo 2. View looking northwest (2018 Assessor photo).



Photo 3. Detail of 1938 USGS aerial photographic survey (arrow to house added).

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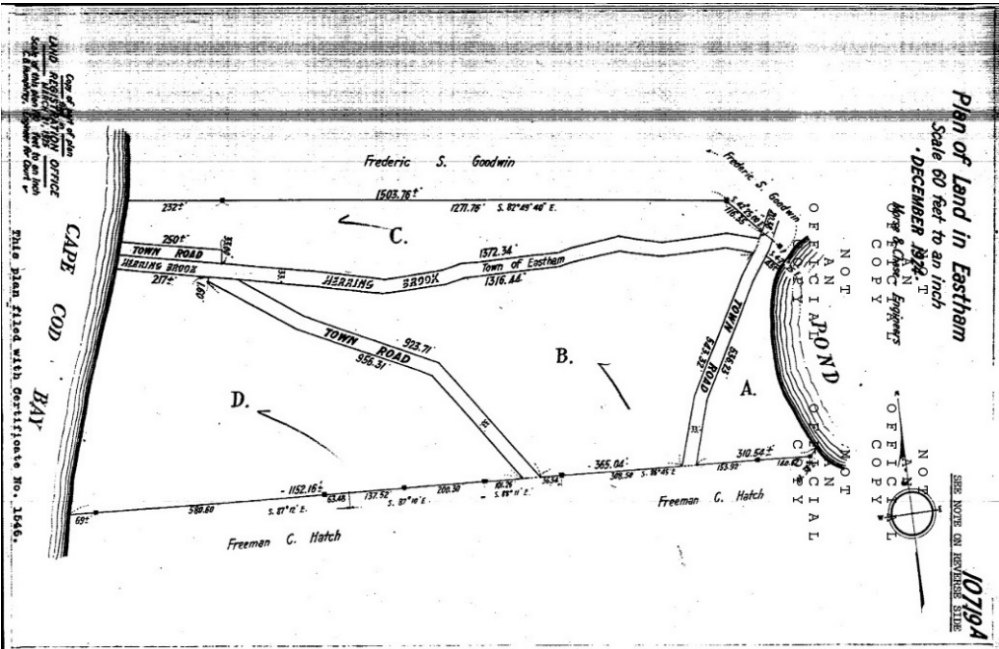


Figure 2. 1924 Plan of Land 10719-A.

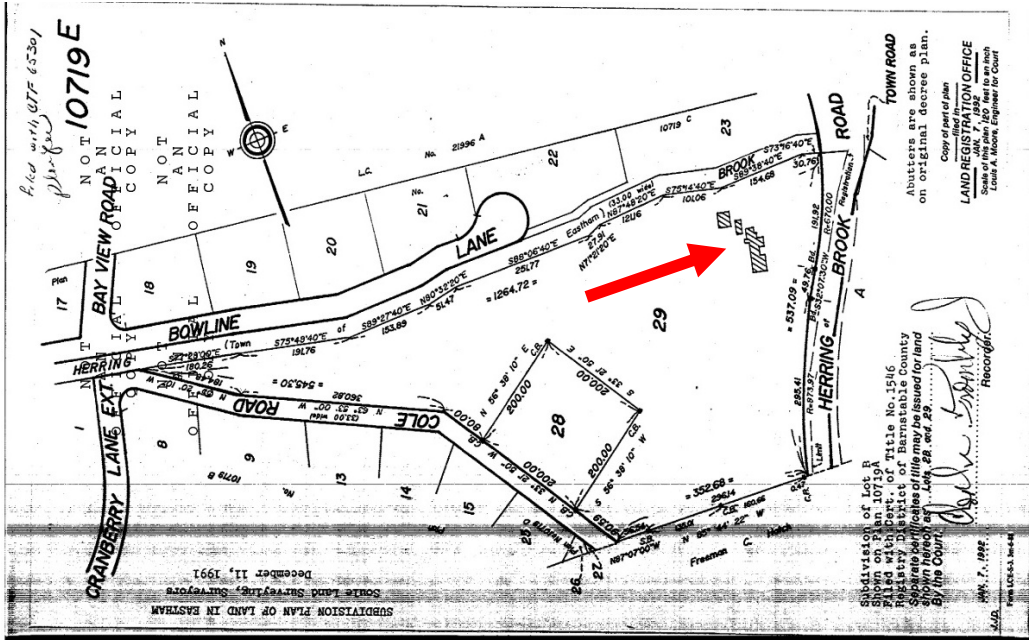


Figure 3. 1991 Plan of Land 10719-E (arrow to 1205 Herring Brook Road added).